
Agenda Item: Major Projects Update

Meeting Date: 10 March 2025

Contact Officer: Project Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the major projects that are currently in flight.

Background

As you are aware, Witney Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy cited five themes to deliver improvements for our community: Parks, Sport, Leisure, Infrastructure & Effectiveness.

This report aims to provide you with an update on the major projects linked to Parks and Recreation, which are: 'Courtside Hub at the Leys (inc. Parking Restrictions)', 'Raleigh Crescent Sports & Social Area', 'Splashpad Renovation' and 'Portaloos at West Witney Sports Ground'

Courtside Hub at the Leys



Current Situation

- Grounds work has been completed, and steel structures are being erected.
- Regular updates from contractor regarding progress (see confidential Appendix A)
- Larger, temporary access gates (by the public toilets) installed to make vehicular access easier and improve pedestrian safety.
- Provisional project completion date remains early Summer 2025

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – n/a
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to achieve over 100% improvement in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – contractor is now on site, which ensure site security and reduces risk of trespassing, vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials, which will also improve thermal efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- Witney Town Council have received a small number of complaints from Fernleigh residents regarding the height and loss of view. Officers are working with Courtside to ensure any complaints are being managed correctly.
- Officers intend to phase the council's £250,000 contribution to Courtside at set milestones that are weighted towards the end of the project, to minimise the risk of any financial loss.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- Courtside philosophy is to serve the community, providing a social and welcoming space for Witney's residents and visitors
- Increased variety of sports will encourage Witney's residents to exercise and feel the physical and social benefits
- The completion of the Courtside Hub, coupled with new skatepark, mini-golf, splashpad and excellent play area, establishes the Leys as a destination park for the area.

Financial implications

- Witney Town Council's contribution of £250,000 will be segmented and phased in accordance with project milestones and acceptable level of risk.
- Work is underway to renegotiate the lease between the Council and Courtside.

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

Raleigh Crescent Sports and Social Park



Current Situation

- After successful consultation, officers have clarity on what the community want from the park
- Witney Town Council continue to work with WODC to procure this project utilising S106 monies.
- Procurement tender has been written and issued to WODC for review and distribution through their procurement channels.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – inclusivity and accessibility to everyone are important design features of this park, which are highlighted in tender and subsequent evaluation process.
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to deliver above the minimal uplift in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – location is an area subjected to occasional anti-social behaviour, which was raised at consultation events. We have asked for this issue to be addressed within the design through lighting and seating innovations.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials and lighting will be energy efficient. MUGA specification includes soundproof materials to reduce the sound of ball strikes.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- Differences in Town Council and District Council protocol, processes and cultures could present challenges agreeing tender specifications and transferring ownership to Witney Town Council. We are managing risk by learning from previous experience with Play Park and effective comms through robust procurement process and project management.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- A key objective of the park is to encourage exercise through fun activities, which attracts users from every segment of the community to encourage social, generational, cultural and physical integration.
- Another key objective is making a safe and fun area for girls to socialise and participate in sporting activities.
- The park will address a growing concern of anti-social behaviour in the existing park, due to its covered seating areas, which are poorly lit.

Financial implications

- The project budget is reliant on S106 monies from District Council, which means the town council must work in partnership to deliver project. Robust processes need to be in place to ensure robust contracts are in place and smooth transfer of ownership is achieved.

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

Splashpad at the Leys Play Area



Current Situation

- Council agreed to procure Splash Park renovation work through KCS local authority framework at the meeting of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee on 3 Feb 2025 (Minute F65 refers).
- Contract awarded to Ustigate Ltd formally on 14 February and delivery date agreed.
- Online survey asking community to vote on design has been concluded and the above design won by a significant 60% compared to other two designs.
- Officers are working with Ustigate and sub-contractors on a construction programme of works that achieve delivery of project at end of May. Courtside have been engaged to highlight any project overlaps and potential risks/impacts.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – WTC aim to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to safe, inclusive, and engaging play environments with good accessibility, diverse equipment, safe spaces that are welcoming and enjoyable for everyone, helping to break down barriers and promote social equality from a young age.
- b) Biodiversity – Integrating biodiversity into playground design not only enriches the play experience but also fosters a deeper connection between children and the natural world. WTC aim to incorporate natural elements like trees, shrubs, and wildflower meadows, which help support local wildlife and create more engaging environments for children.
- c) Crime & Disorder – consideration is given to equipment that can withstand vandalism and reduce risk of anti-social behaviour. Efforts will be made revitalise spaces leading to

improved community relations and a reduction in crime and disorder, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for residents.

- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – consideration is given to ensuring equipment is manufactured from sustainable and recycled materials for equipment and surfaces. This reduces the carbon footprint and promotes eco-friendly practices.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- The Splash Park has been at the receiving end of some poor feedback from the community, which has prompted this project. This highlights a reputational risk that officers will carefully manage with effective communication throughout the planning and construction phases, whilst delivering the project in time for the warmer weather.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- A key objective of the play areas review is to identify parks that can be improved to encourage exercise through fun activities to attract users from every segment of the community which encourages social, generational, cultural and physical integration.

Financial implications

- We have an earmarked reserve budget of £172,500.

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

Portaloos at West Witney Sports & Social Club



Current Situation

- Council agreed that the Portaloos should be offered to clubs for them to manage between themselves until the Social Club renovation project complete.
- Despite all clubs confirming the Portaloos were useful during early consultation, no clubs accepted the offer to take responsibility for them by the deadline date.
- As a result, Officers have locked the Portaloos and are currently making arrangements for their removal.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- e) Equality – n/a
- f) Biodiversity – n/a
- g) Crime & Disorder – n/a
- h) Environment & Climate Emergency – n/a

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- There is a risk of reputational damage as the Portaloos have been the subject to one complaint. The complainant has escalated this to the local MP.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- n/a

Financial implications

- no financial implications

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.